

WORD OF MOUTH

LARGER THAN LIFE

Muhammad Ali may be the best-known native son of Louisville, but the city wasn't always kind to the boxer. After winning a gold medal in the 1960 Olympics, he was refused service at one of the city's restaurants due to his race. But his impressive athletic feats and his work on peace and justice led Louisville to change its mind.

One of the city's main downtown arteries was named for him in 1978, and in 2005, the Muhammad Ali Center opened downtown. Ali lives in Phoenix but returns several times a year for meetings at the Center, according to Jeanie Kahnke, vice president for communications at the Ali Center. The Center is the place where his story is finally being told and used as an inspiration point to challenge the next generation to greatness.

Ali was born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr. in 1942 at the Louisville City Hospital, now the University of Louisville Medical Center. His former home at 3302 W. Grand Ave. is in private hands. Ali ran the streets around his home and trained at the Columbia Gym, located on Fourth Street south of York Street. The public nicknamed him The Louisville Lip for his witty, quick banter. When he joined the Nation of Islam, he took the moniker that the public knows him by today.

Visitors can walk through Ali's life story at the Center and view exhibits on the six values he characterized — respect, conviction, confidence, dedication, spirituality, and giving — watch a film about his life, and even take a round in the ring. But this isn't a repository for memorabilia. This is a place for "ideas, not things," Kahnke says. The Muhammad Ali Center is open Monday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 12 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$9 for adults, discounts available for children, seniors, students, and groups. — *Robyn Davis Sekula*
> Muhammad Ali Center, 144 N. Sixth St., 502-992-5329; alicenter.org

PAYING TRIBUTE TO 'THE GREATEST'

Since 2002, the Greater Louisville Pride Foundation has erected a series of murals on walls throughout town, honoring prominent Louisvillians and hoping to build pride in the community. A mural of Muhammad Ali was the first to go up.

"Ali was one of the reasons we started this," says Mike Sheehy, foundation president. "It was shocking to me how many people didn't realize Ali was from Louisville."

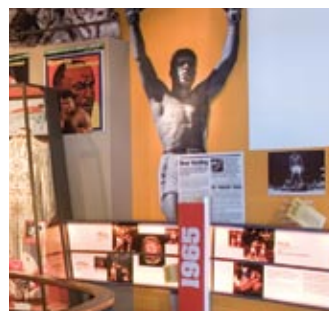
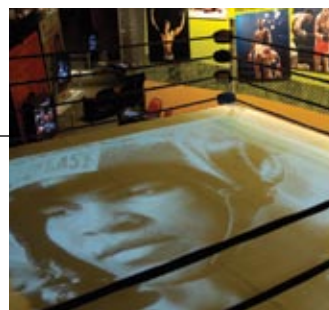
The sepia-colored murals begin with an approved photograph of the honoree. The photo is digitally printed onto a mesh material. One mural can cost from \$11,000 to \$35,000 to create, with each one staying up for about two years.

The foundation has installed 14 murals, including Olympic gold-medalist swimmer Mary T. Meagher, broadcaster Diane Sawyer, and Tori Murden — the first woman to row across the Atlantic Ocean. "Our list of people to profile gets deeper and deeper," says Sheehy. "We'll run out of wall space before we run out of people." — *Martha-Page Ransdell*



The Ali mural was the first in a Greater Louisville Pride Foundation series.

Right (top to bottom): A multimedia presentation is projected onto a full-size boxing ring; hands-on exhibits show how Ali trained for his matches; the Hope and Dream mural is made of children's paintings and drawings.



TOP PHOTO BY JOHN NATION. BOXING RING EXHIBIT PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ALI CENTER

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WORD OF MOUTH



BOURBON COUNTRY'S SEVEN SISTERS

Ask people unfamiliar with Kentucky to go beyond instant name recognition — such as the Derby and a certain fried chicken — and some may identify the Bluegrass State as the wellspring of bourbon. Nearly every drop of the distinctive corn-based whiskey that gets to market is distilled in Kentucky. Visitors to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail have the opportunity to savor the history — and a mellow sip or two.

“All of the distilleries now receive visitors graciously, and all of them now have an expression of their craft that they can be proud of,” says Bill Samuels Jr., president and CEO of the **Maker's Mark** facility in Loretto. “The bourbon is better than it's been.”

Stacey Yates, vice president of marketing communications at the Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau, suggests visitors make Louisville the base for expeditions into “Bourbon Country.” Head east toward Frankfort and horse country along the Kentucky River or south toward historic Bardstown.

The jaunt east might start at **Buffalo Trace**, the oldest continually operating distillery in the United States. (While most others closed during Prohibition, its products have flowed uninterrupted since 1787 because it was granted a li-

cense to make whiskey for “medicinal use.”) Also on the banks of the river that was an early water highway to markets, **Wild Turkey's** distillery features a 40-foot-high column still and the current dean of master distillers, Jimmy Russell. **Four Roses** is notable for its Spanish Mission-style architecture while the **Woodford Reserve Distillery** takes you back in time with preserved grounds that make it easy to imagine the whiskey-making art during the 1800s.

The three stops toward Bardstown might begin with the **Jim Beam Distillery**, which provides the best on-site history lesson at its American Outpost. **Heaven Hill** offers tastings in a barrel-shaped room with a circular bar, while Maker's Mark offers tours of the entire distilling, aging, and labeling process. Visitors can buy a bottle to go and dip it themselves in the brand's trademark red wax.

Louisville, meanwhile, has four well-stocked bourbon bars, two in downtown hotels (The Old Seelbach Bar and Jockey Silks at the Galt House) and two in local restaurants (Bourbons Bistro and the Maker's Mark Lounge). — *Bruce Allar*

Top (left to right): Bourbons from Maker's Mark, Buffalo Trace, Wild Turkey, Four Roses, Woodford Reserve, Jim Beam, and Heaven Hill

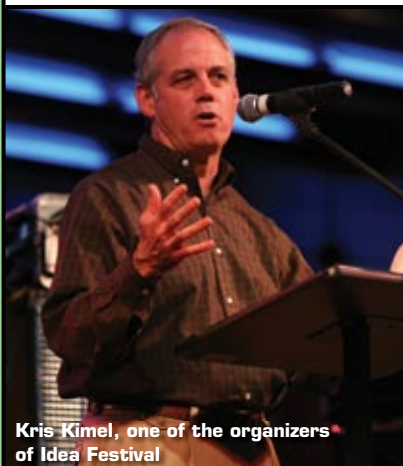
WHERE GREAT IDEAS GATHER

Some of the world's best and brightest innovators gather every year in Louisville for Idea Festival.

“We try to bring together some of the leading innovators of the world in all different fields and get them to think outside of the box and talk about the cutting-edge ideas that they're doing,” says Kris Kimel, president of The Kentucky Science and Technology Corp., which is the lead organizer of the event.

This year's Idea Festival is set for September 13 through 15, and the nucleus of the programs will be at the Kentucky International Convention Center in downtown Louisville. Some of the festival's events will be free. Speakers include Apple Computer co-founder Steve Wozniak, filmmaker Tiffany Shlain, and fashion designer Karen Walker, among others. Kimel expects roughly 10,000 people to attend this year's event.

For more information: ideafestival.com — *Robyn Davis Sekula*



Kris Kimel, one of the organizers of Idea Festival

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WORD OF MOUTH



Writer Sue Grafton poses in the gardens of her Louisville estate.

L IS FOR LOUISVILLE

Louisville is the kind of city you can fall in love with, says author Sue Grafton. But Grafton's love for her hometown didn't exactly begin with a swoon.

Grafton is the author of 20 mystery novels, all of which have titles that begin with a letter of the alphabet, including the forthcoming *T is for Trespass*, due out in December. She grew up in Louisville and lived there until she was 21, when she moved to California. "When I left, I was thrilled," Grafton says. "I thought it was the happiest day of my life when I crossed the Kentucky state line."

But Grafton's husband, Steve Humphrey, a professor, eventually convinced her Louisville would be an ideal place to live. When they visited her family, he enjoyed the city. "He loved the look of it," says Grafton, 67. "It is so green and so lush. In the spring . . . the thunderstorms are so dramatic. The foliage is dramatic. It is beautiful."

Grafton also loves Louisville for reasons that might be lost on anyone but mystery authors: the rampant sin industry. "There is a lot of sin money in this town, whiskey, cigarettes, gambling," she says. "The people who earned that money are very generous about giving

back. They are very supportive of the arts. This is a very sophisticated little city."

Sophisticated cities often have good restaurants. Lilly's is among Grafton's favorite dining spots, along with 610 Magnolia, Avalon, and Jack Fry's.

Her father, C.W. "Chip" Grafton, was an attorney who also wrote mysteries. He had published two books of a projected eight-book series. But Chip Grafton died in 1982, before the 1983 publication of *A is for Alibi*, Sue Grafton's first book. He never even read the manuscript. "He knew it was being published," she says. "But I wanted to present him with the *fait accompli*."

Grafton hasn't written about Louisville in her books except, of course, in the novel that begins with L, *L is for Lawless*. Her heroine, Kinsey Millhone, comes to Louisville as part of the plot. Millhone's home base is a fictionalized California city called Santa Teresa. Making up cities gives Grafton more liberties and also means readers can't pick her novels apart looking for details that she got wrong.

Grafton and Humphrey split their time between homes in Louisville and California.

— Robyn Davis Sekula

EMBEDDED HISTORY

Just a couple miles from the modern bustle of downtown Louisville sits a piece of land that takes visitors back hundreds of years or more.

Falls of the Ohio State Park, on the Indiana side of the Ohio River, combines a wildlife preserve, a Revolutionary War-era cabin replica, and fossil beds that stretch to nearly 400 million years ago.

It's the park's titular "falls" that were first responsible for much of the activity there. Rapids dot the river, with drops of as much as 12 feet. "Boats could not navigate the rapids, and that's why humans ended up settling here," says Dani Cummins, executive director of the Falls of the Ohio Foundation, which supports the park.

At the center, visitors learn about the plants and sea creatures found in the park's Devonian-era fossil beds. Some 600 species of fossils have been identified at the park, Cummins says. More are likely as the limestone base erodes. — Marian Cowhig
> Falls of the Ohio State Park, Clarksville, Indiana; 812-280-9970; fallssoftheohio.org

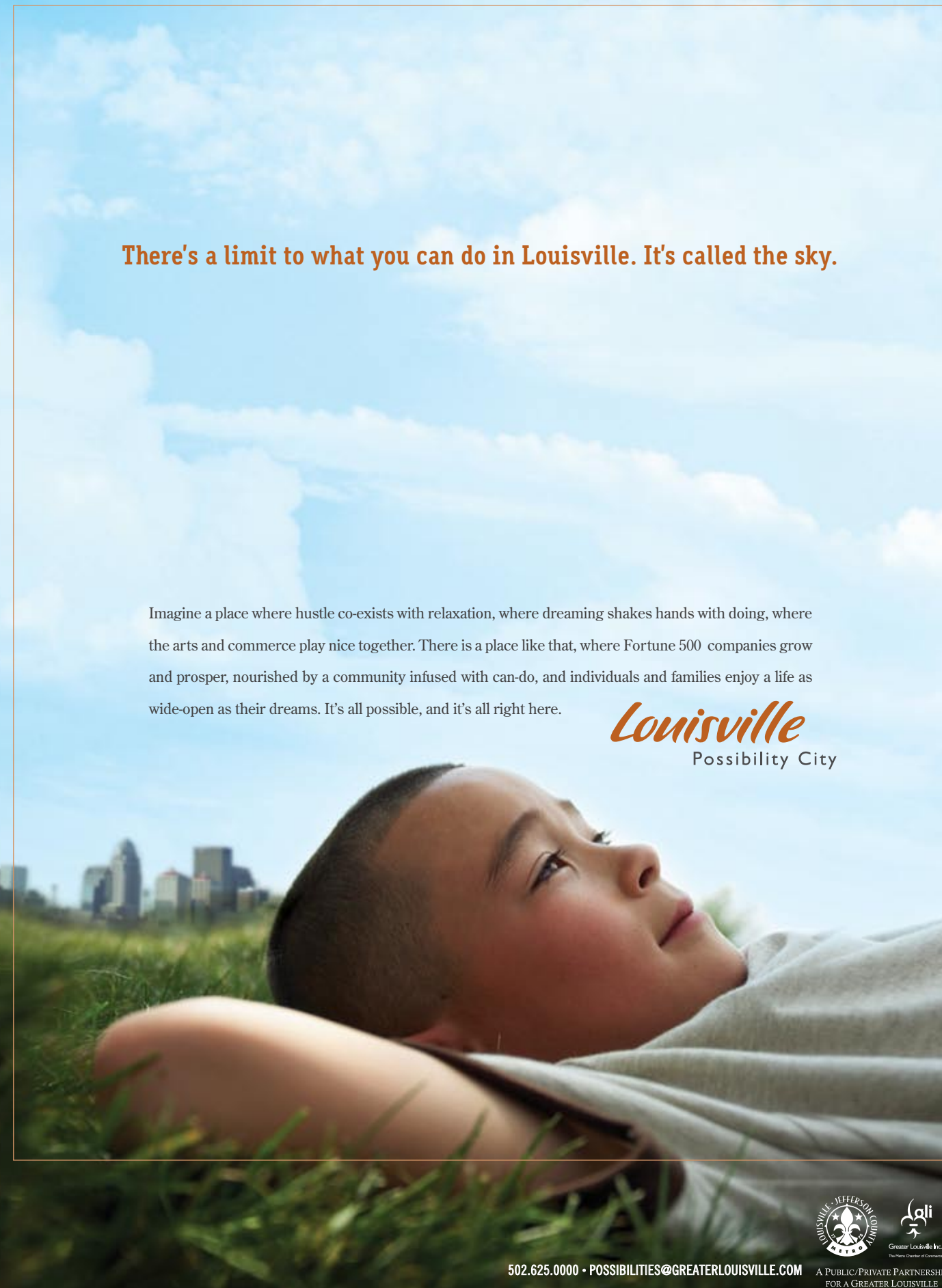


A visitor stands alongside 400-million-year-old Devonian-era fossils.

There's a limit to what you can do in Louisville. It's called the sky.

Imagine a place where hustle co-exists with relaxation, where dreaming shakes hands with doing, where the arts and commerce play nice together. There is a place like that, where Fortune 500 companies grow and prosper, nourished by a community infused with can-do, and individuals and families enjoy a life as wide-open as their dreams. It's all possible, and it's all right here.

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